

## A collage of images showing various recreational activities: people hiking, a person on a motorcycle, a person on a bicycle, a family walking with a stroller, people on a paved path, and people on horseback.

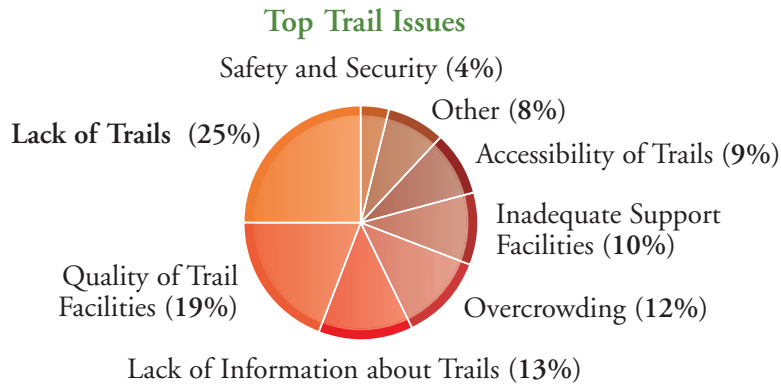
This Executive Summary highlights the results of a multi-year planning process and includes recommendations of the New Jersey Trails Plan.

**The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection**  
**The New Jersey Department of Transportation**

## Overview

Trends show increasing interest in trail use of all kinds, and more benefits are recognized today than ever before. Health benefits from more active living elevate the value of trails in communities, where many can access trails on a daily basis for both recreation and transportation. Economic benefits are well established and diverse, from increasing property values and local business revenues to generating tourism. Trails can act as green spaces that preserve and protect the environment, and can become venues for education about our natural and cultural resources.

Public outreach included Open Houses, Vision Workshops and a variety of surveys to gauge public opinion and guide the planning process. This chart summarizes responses to one question from approximately 3700 survey respondents.

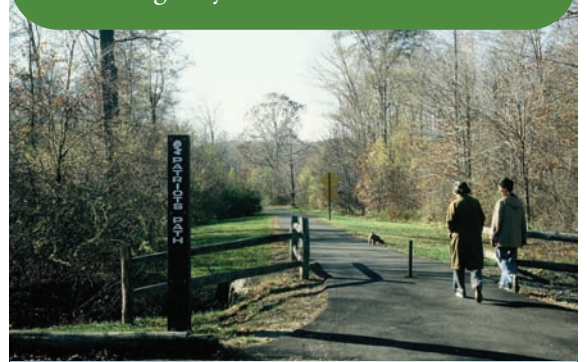


The Plan affirms the key issues and needs facing New Jersey's trails:

- Funding – greater funding for all phases of trail development
- Facility Needs – more trails for more and diverse trail users
- Sharing Trails – more trails dedicated to specific uses
- Motorized Trail Uses – more venues for motorized trail use
- Urban Trails – more urban trails for recreation and transportation
- Special Needs Trails – more accessible trails for sensory and mobility impaired users
- Guidelines & Standards – coordinate and standardize planning, design and maintenance
- Trail Rights-Of-Way – facilitate land and right-of-way acquisition (esp. for rail and utility corridors)
- Information and Promotion – more complete and accessible trail information

The Trails Plan defines trails broadly to include a wide range of facility types:

- Hiking/Foot Trails
- Bicycling Trails/ Bike Paths/ Recreational Touring Routes
- Mountain Biking Trails
- Equestrian Trails
- Water Trails
- Winter/ Snow Trails
- \* Off Highway Vehicle Trails



*Trails in natural, rural, suburban and city settings are all part of New Jersey's trail networks with unique characteristics and needs*

## HISTORY OF NEW JERSEY'S TRAILS

"New Jersey Trails System Act"  
(Chapter 159: P.L.)

Chapter 367: Laws of the  
New Jersey Trails Council

The 1982 New Jersey Trails Plan

Administrative Order No. 19  
(NJ Trails Council Reform)

The 1996 New Jersey Trails Plan

Rules of 2000  
(8 Trails Added to Trails System)

NJTrailsPlan  
Update

1974 1975

1982

1992

1996

2000

2006/2009



# Vision

“New Jersey residents value the diverse networks of trails throughout the state, well maintained facilities within cities, suburbs and countryside. Everyone has access to a full range of outdoor recreation activities and transportation alternatives within and among communities, and quality trail experiences.”

A shared vision promotes collaboration towards common ends. Vision Themes describe an ideal future for New Jersey Trails, each focusing on a different aspect of the Vision. The Plan sets Goals for each Vision Theme, along with Recommendations for strategic short or long-term actions. A summary of the Plan's recommendations are presented on the following pages.

## Priorities for Implementation:

Early implementation of Plan recommendations will focus on five priority areas:

### Community Pathways

Establishing community pathway networks is a priority for New Jersey, with a goal of providing a walking trail within ten minutes of every resident. Community pathways are trails within and among cities and towns that connect neighborhoods, parks, schools, workplaces and other public destinations, and are conveniently integrated with sidewalk and street networks. Because of their convenience and location within population centers, community pathways can be used by many people of all ages and abilities for recreation and transportation.

### Trails and Health

Trails can provide an essential health infrastructure for a community. Use of trails for positive health outcomes is being seen more and more by health professionals as an excellent way to encourage people to adopt lifestyle changes that will bring lifetime health benefits. Trail promotion should routinely emphasize public health benefits, and the public health and medical community should be encouraged to participate in trail promotion programs from the state to local levels. More coordination between the trails and the health community is needed to realize the mutual benefits of this connection.

### Comprehensive Trail Inventory



Complete, convenient and accessible trails information is essential to guide the public in using trails and decision-makers in assessing facility needs and priorities. A comprehensive trails inventory would provide the public with readily available information about the location, type, length, challenges/difficulty, accessibility, uses, restrictions and amenities associated with each trail. Federal, state, county and trails organizations that provide and manage trails should share the responsibility for the inventory of trails within their jurisdictions, coordinating the results through a lead organization.





















*(continued on back)*

## *Vision Themes Imagine...*

- **Trails for All** - All types of trail users have access to sustainable recreational trails throughout New Jersey.
- **Trails for Community Connections** – An extensive network of community pathways for transportation, recreation and health are convenient to people of all cultures, ages and abilities within cities and towns.
- **Maintenance and Operations** - New Jersey is renowned for the quality of its well maintained and managed trails.
- **Funding** - Funding is available and accessible for all levels of trails planning, development and maintenance from a variety of public and private sources.
- **Trail Advocates and the Trail Experience** - Trail advocates representing every type of trail use cooperate to support and advance New Jersey trails.
- **Information, Communication and Promotion** - Public awareness and access to trails information is at an all time high as a result of outreach efforts to the general public, decision-makers, trail advocates, and trail providers.
- **Planning and Development** - State, regional, county, local and non-profit groups in New Jersey routinely come together to plan and implement trails projects.

# Summary of Recommendations

Recommended Time Frame for Initiating Action:		 Ongoing	 1-2 yrs.	 3-5 yrs.	 6-10 yrs.
<b>1 - TRAILS FOR ALL</b>					
<b>Needs Assessment:</b>					
1) Conduct a Statewide Trail Needs Assessment continuing the work of the Plan through a general public survey to statistically validate priorities (Trails Council, Consortium of Trails Groups)					
<b>Trail Development Priorities:</b>					
2) Prioritize trail development to address facility supply deficiencies based on needs assessment (State, Counties, Municipalities)					
3) Accelerate ROW acquisition and development of multiple use trails, especially on rail rights of way (State, Counties, Municipalities)					
<b>Expanding Trail Development Opportunities:</b>					
4) Identify opportunities to provide sustainable trail access on publicly preserved open space (Counties, Municipalities)					
5) Incorporate potential trails use into the Farmland Preservation Program (State)					
6) Encourage private landowners to make land available for public use (Trails Organizations)					
<b>Facilities For All Trail Activities:</b>					
7) Increase trails accessible to the mobility and sensory impaired throughout New Jersey (State, Trails Council, Trails Organizations)					
8) Collaborate to establish water trails facilities throughout New Jersey and raise awareness of water trail opportunities (State, Trails Council, Trails Organizations)					
9) Collaborate to establish OHV riding facilities, education programs and registration programs (State, Trails Council, Trails Organization)					
<b>2 - COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS</b>					
<b>Trail Development Priorities:</b>					
1) Complete key linkages to establish trails continuity (State, Counties Municipalities)					
2) Acquire rights of way and provide trails that connect residential areas with community destinations – parks, trails, schools – and that connect neighborhoods and communities (Counties, Municipalities)					
<b>Expanding Trails Opportunities:</b>					
3) Establish state regulatory or legislative means to expedite establishing trails on unused rail rights-of-way and utility corridors (State)					
4) Encourage use of trails in the NJ Safe Routes to School Program (State)					
5) Include trails in development, redevelopment and transit proposals (Municipalities, Builders and Developers, NJ Transit)					

Recommended Time Frame for Initiating Action:		 Ongoing	 1-2 yrs.	 3-5 yrs.	 6-10 yrs.
<b>3 - TRAIL MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONS</b>					
<b>Trail Maintenance Policies, Priorities and Funding:</b>					
1) Prioritize and fund maintenance and enforcement programs continuity (State, Counties Municipalities)					
2) Provide “roving” trail crews and targeted funding for state trail maintenance (State Park Service)					
3) Prioritize improvements that enhance trail accessibility (State, Counties Municipalities)					
<b>Trail Guidelines and Rating System:</b>					
4) Adopt/endorse maintenance guidelines and a Universal Rating System (challenge level) for trail providers and users (Consortium of Trails Groups)					
<b>Volunteer Programs:</b>					
5) Expand Volunteer Programs to assist in trail maintenance (State, Counties)					
6) Support the development of a statewide volunteer awards program (State, Counties, Municipalities)					
<b>4 - FUNDING FOR TRAILS</b>					
<b>State, County and Local Funding:</b>					
1) Increase the capacity of the State Trails Program with additional staff/staff support/resources (State)					
2) Fund trails planning and development; provide stable and dedicated funding for operations, maintenance and enforcement (State, Counties, Municipalities)					
3) Allocate funds and resources to expand the NJ Trails System; provide incentives in state-managed funding sources; fund management plans for eligible trails (State, Recreational Trails Program)					
4) Conduct a needs assessment and prepare a financial plan for trail facilities on state parks and forests (State Park Service)					
5) Provide funding incentives for multi-jurisdictional trails (State, Counties, Municipalities)					
6) Consider taxing authorities, bond initiatives and land development strategies to develop trails and community pathway networks (Municipalities)					
<b>Maximize Trails Funding Sources:</b>					
7) Update Recreational Trails Funding Guidelines to support Trails Plan goals (State, Trails Council)					
8) Increase the share of Transportation Enhancements funding for trails development (State)					
9) Reestablish NJDOT funding program for pedestrian facilities and continue funding program for bicycle facilities (State)					
10) Ensure that trails are eligible for funding through corporate business taxes approved for recreation facility development					

# Summary of Recommendations (con't)

				
Recommended Time Frame for Initiating Action:	Ongoing	1-2 yrs.	3-5 yrs.	6-10 yrs.
<b>Diversify Funding Sources:</b>				
11) Include trails as an earmarked funding category under funding programs, such as Green Acres, Farmland Preservation Program, etc. (State)				
12) Apply funds from the (proposed) OHV registration towards OHV trails and parks, guided by an OHV Task Force (State)				
13) Explore non-traditional strategies for private, corporate and non-profit participation in trails (Consortium of Trails Groups)				
<b>Document Existing and Potential Funding Sources:</b>				
14) Develop a NJ Trails Funding Plan that identifies all available and prospective funding sources (State, Trails Council)				
15) Develop a comprehensive trails funding guide with emphasis on non-traditional sources and strategies (State, Trails Council)				
<b>5 -TRAIL ADVOCATES AND THE TRAIL EXPERIENCE</b>				
<b>State or Regional Conference/Workshops:</b>				
1) Hold periodic trails conferences (Trails Council)				
<b>Statewide Trail User Education:</b>				
2) Establish a Task Force for Trail Education to address the needs of trail users and promote trail use etiquette; conduct a statewide media campaign (Trails Council)				
<b>Statewide Trails Volunteer Program:</b>				
3) Establish a statewide volunteer training and recognition program that can be replicated at regional, county and municipal levels (State, Trails Council, Consortium of Trails Groups)				
<b>Specialty Technical Assistance:</b>				
4) Establish a public/private partnership program to engage trails organizations in providing technical assistance to state, county and municipal land managers (State, Trails Council, Consortium of Trails Groups)				
<b>6 -TRAIL INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION AND PROMOTION</b>				
<b>Statewide Trails Inventory:</b>				
1) Conduct a comprehensive inventory of trails (Trails Council, Consortium of Trails Groups)				
<b>Trails Research and Studies:</b>				
2) Conduct NJ-specific trails-related research and studies through partnerships among state agencies, educational institutions and non-profit organizations (State, Trail Organizations, Educational Institutions)				

Recommended Time Frame for Initiating Action:		Ongoing	1-2 yrs.	3-5 yrs.	6-10 yrs.
Trails Clearinghouse:					
3)	Develop a Web-based clearinghouse of trails information for trail users and providers; develop tools and resources for publication (Trail Organizations, Educational Institutions)				
Trails Promotion:					
4)	Develop statewide map(s) of major trails representing all user groups (Trails Council, Consortium of Trails Groups)				
5)	Establish a formal alliance of trail groups to lead a Statewide Promotion Campaign; hold a statewide trails event annually (Trails Council, Consortium of Trails Groups)				
6)	Develop or expand programs to increase awareness of community pathways within cities and towns (State, Counties, Municipalities)				
7)	Trail promotion should emphasize public health benefits; partnership between the public health and trails community should be encouraged from state to local levels (State, Trails Council, Trails Organizations)				
7 - TRAILS PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT					
Trails Planning:					
1)	NJDEP should be the steward, monitor, and prime implementer of the NJ Trails Plan, updating the Plan periodically (State)				
2)	Include trails in the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) (State)				
3)	Provide both single use and multi-use trails in state parks and forests based on environmental conditions and needs assessment, with an emphasis on establishing and protecting “wilderness” hiking trails on undeveloped lands (State)				
4)	Amend the Municipal Land Use Law to require trails to be included in municipal master plans (State); include trails in master plans and strategic planning documents (State, Regional Agencies, Counties, Municipalities)				
5)	Establish guidelines for county and municipal trails planning documents to promote consistency with NJ Trails Plan objectives (State, Trails Program)				
6)	Develop a NJ specific resource guide with procedures for planning and developing trails (State, Trails Council, Consortium of Trails Groups)				
7)	Establish an Interagency Trails Council to coordinate regulatory review of trail policies and to advise the legislature (State, Trails Council)				
8)	Explore legislative opportunities and incentive programs for land developers to support trails as part of the development process (State, Counties, Municipalities)				
New Jersey Trails System:					
9)	Revitalize the State Trails System as the centerpiece of the New Jersey Trails Program; increase the number of designated trails (State)				

(continued from page 2)

## Volunteer Programs for Trail Maintenance

Volunteers can provide essential services to support trail managers in maintaining trails that deliver quality experiences. A collaborative and statewide volunteer program can harness the experience and skills of volunteers in keeping trails open and safe. Collaboration among government agencies and trails organizations can streamline the process of engaging, training and managing volunteers to assist trail managers at the state, county and local levels. A statewide volunteer program will also address the policy and institutional issues that commonly inhibit volunteer programs, such as liability.

## Trail Events and Conferences

Working together, trails advocates can become a powerful voice for New Jersey's trails. Collectively, the trails community has wide ranging expertise in planning, developing and operating all types of trails in New Jersey. The Plan recommends holding trails events and conferences on a periodic basis to build relationships, share ideas and explore common objectives and strategies. Improved communication among all the trails interest groups can strengthen the trails community and generate new opportunities for collaboration.

## Plan Implementation

The Trails Plan recognizes that the future of trails will depend on the coordination of effort at all levels of government and among the many non-profit organizations who all have a role in planning, developing and maintaining trails throughout New Jersey. New Jersey has a long history of trails planning. What is needed now is collaboration to achieve a statewide vision benefiting all types of trail users.



## Acknowledgements

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) and the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) express their gratitude to the Trails Plan Advisory Committee for their extensive time and efforts contributing to this Plan. Special recognition is also given to the New Jersey Trails Council, which represents trails interests statewide as advisors to NJDEP and NJDOT. The efforts of the Trails Council led to this Trails Plan update, and many members also served on the Trails Plan Advisory Committee.

This Plan was funded by The Federal Highway Administration under the NJDOT Bicycle & Pedestrian Local Technical Assistance Program.



Consultant Team:  
The RBA Group in association with  
Community Trail Connection

## Trails Plan Advisory Committee

*American Canoe Association/Mohawk Canoe Club*  
*Brendan T. Byrne State Forest*  
*Burlington County Division of Parks*  
*D&R Greenway Land Trust*  
*Isles, Inc.*  
*Jersey Off-Road Bicycle Association*  
*Kittatinny Valley State Park*  
*Monmouth County Park System*  
*Morris County Parks Commission*  
*Morris Township Parks and Recreation*  
*New York - New Jersey Trail Conference*  
*NJ Conservation Foundation*  
*NJDCA, NJ Office of Recreation*  
*NJDEP, Division of Parks and Forestry*  
*NJDEP, Green Acres Program*  
*NJDEP, Natural & Historic Resources*  
*NJDOT, Office of Bicycle & Pedestrian Programs*  
*NJ Off-Highway Vehicle Association*  
*NJ Trail Ride Association*  
*Rails-to-Trails Conservancy*  
*Township of Randolph*

## New Jersey Trails Council

*William Foelsch (Chairman), Morris Township Parks & Recreation*  
*A. Michele Adams, NJ Trail Ride Association*  
*Michele Byers (Laura Szwak, Alternate), New Jersey Conservation Foundation*  
*Sheree Davis, NJDOT, Office of Bicycle & Pedestrian Programs*  
*John Flynn (Steve Jandoli, Alternate), NJDEP, Green Acres Program*  
*Edward Goodell (Brenda Holzinger, Alternate) New York – New Jersey Trail Conference*  
*Daneen Morris, Camden Greenways, Inc.*  
*Jeanne Mroczko, NJDEP, Division of Parks & Forestry*  
*Christian Nielsen (Denis Albisser, Alternate), American Canoe Association/Mohawk Canoe Club*  
*John Parrinello, NJ Off-Highway Vehicle Association*  
*Wally Tunison, Jersey Off-Road Bicycle Association*  
*Larry Miller (staff), NJDEP, Division of Parks and Forestry*